

REMARKS

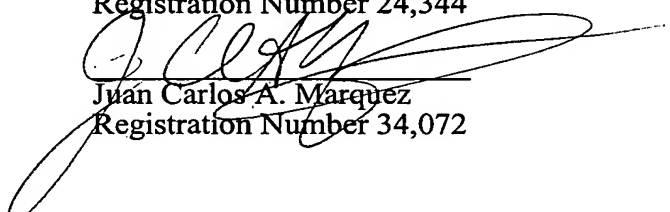
Applicants have amended the specification to incorporate the disclosure of U.S. Pat. App. No. 09/942,563 and claim the priority of the prior application by reference. No new matter has been added to the application as a result of this amendment.

As revealed in the interview conducted on August 28, 2003 with the Examiner of the abandoned parent case: U.S. Pat. App. No. 09/942,563, the recitation of "the timing for applying the SAMPB" carried patentability weight only in method claims but not in apparatus claims. Therefore, Applicants hereby file a continuation application with method claims reciting that "after immobilizing nucleic acid probes, hydrolyzing maleimide groups on the region where nucleic acid probes are not immobilized".

In view of the above amendments and Applicants' comments stated herein, Applicants respectfully request an early and favorable action on the merits.

Respectfully submitted,

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